(c) by when the second phase trial, which entails testing the engine inflight, is likely to be undertaken; and

(d) the total cost of the project and expenditure incurred thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The tests conducted so far have proved mechanical soundness of design and conformity of performance parameters with design estimates. Further tests as per development schedule are in progress.

(c) The flight testing of the engine has been planned in December 1998.

(d) The total cost of the project is Rs. 609.16 crore (at 1994 price level). The expenditure incurred upto 31 July 1996 was Rs. 303.00 crore.

Opening of Kendriya Vidyalayas

3863. SHRI SHANTILAL PARSOTAMDAS PATEL:
SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state the fate of recommendation made in 1994-95 by the Standing Committee on Human Resource Development regarding opening of more and more Kendriya Vidyalayas every year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MUHI RAM SAIKIA): The Government have approved opening of 20 Kendriya Vidyalayas each year from the academic year 1993-94 to 1997-98 under Civil and Defence Sectors and as many as found suitable under Project Sector. Accordingly 23 Kendriya Vidyalayas have been sanctioned during 1994-95 and 1995-96 each and 20 during 1996-97.

[English]

Employment of Women in Armed Forces

3864. SHRI GOPAL KRISHNA T.:
SHRI RAMCHANDRA VEERAPPA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of women employed in country's armed forces as on date;

(b) the categories in which women are employed and whether any special service conditions are applied to women working in armed forces; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU): (a) to (c). The total number of women employed in country's armed forces as on date is 433.

2. Recruitment of women officers has been approved in the following branches/departments of the Armed Forces:

Army: Army Postal service, Judge Advocate General's department, Army Education Corps, Army Ordnance Corps (Central Ammunition Depots and Material Management), Army Service Corps (Food Scientist and Catering Officers), Corps of Signals, Intelligence Corps, Corps of Engineers, Corps of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering and the Regiment of Artillery.

Navy: Education, Logistics, Law Cadres and the Executive Branch for Air Traffic Control duties.

Air Force: Non-Technical Ground duty Branches, namely, Administration, Logistics, Accounts, Education and Meteorology; Technical Branches: Flying Pilots (Transport & Helicopter Streams), Navigation Branches.

3. For the present, non-combatant role has been envisaged for women officers. Women officers will not generally be posted to field formations and their posting will be generally restricted to Service Headquarters and Command & Brigade Headquarters.

Closing of Missions Abroad

3865. SHRI AJMEERA CHANDULAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the countries where Indian Missions were closed during the last three years and the reasons therefor;

(b) the countries where the Government propose to open new Missions during the current year;

(c) whether any reciprocal arrangement is existing for the opening of Missions by those countries in India;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): (a) For reasons of economy, three Embassies were closed in 1993 in Malawi, Colombia and Zaire. Mission in Colombia was subsequently reopened.

(b) In the light of our subsequent experience, further consideration is being given to those decisions and there are also proposals for opening new resident Missions in some more countries. Formal announcements will be made once our assessment and preparations are complete.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e). Do not arise.

Basic Shiksha Parishad

3866. SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Basic Shiksha Parishad, Saharanpur, U.P. had appointed 263 trained Assistant Teachers during March, 1995 to May, 1995;

(b) if so, whether any advertisements were published in newspapers in this regard and interviews of the candidates were held and the appointments were made by the District Basic Shiksha Adhikari;

(c) whether the district administration has declared these appointments as invalid and all these teachers have not been paid any salaries for the last seventeen months;

(d) the reasons for declaring the appointments as invalid and not paying the salaries to these teachers;

(e) the steps being taken to rectify the situation and to provide adequate and justified compensation to these teachers; and

(f) the action taken against the officials found responsible?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MUHI RAM SAIKIA): As per information received from the State Project Director, UP Education for All, Lucknow.

(a) The number of teachers appointed by Basic Shiksha Adhikari, Saharanpur during the said period is 270.

(b) Yes Sir.

(c) to (d). Inquiry conducted by the Secretary, UP Basic Shiksha Parishad has revealed some procedural irregularities in the appointment of the said teachers in the matters of verification of vacancies, preparation of select list, reservation of vacancies in respect of SC/ST and OBC categories. Also the select list was not approved by the duly constituted Selection Committee and no financial approval from the concerned authorities was obtained. On account of these irregularities payment of salaries could not be made to the teachers.

(e) A writ petition has been filed in the High Court of Allahabad praying for payment of salaries to the appointed teachers. The Court vide its judgement dated 22.5.96 desired the State Govt. to examine the matter and pass appropriate orders for release of salaries. Director, Education (Basic) afforded the petitioner a hearing on 26.7.1996. The hearing was adjourned on the request of the petitioner.

(f) As per orders of Hon'ble High Court the Director, Education (Basic) is hearing the matter. Till the final decision of the Director, the question of action does not arise.

Indian Missions Abroad

3867. SHRI SURESH PRABHU: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Indian Embassies, Consulates and other related offices of Missions abroad;

(b) the number of persons employed therein;

(c) the average quantum of funds spent thereon annually; and

(d) the details of benefits accruing to India as a result of business promotion efforts abroad?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) The Indian Missions/Posts abroad are 158.

(b) There are 4564 regular posts on the strength of the Ministry of External Affairs for manning the above Missions/ Posts.

(c) Average annual expenditure on the maintenance of above Missions/Posts abroad over the last 3 financial years is Rs 409.15 crores, under the budget of the Ministry of External Affairs.

(d) The Indian Missions/Posts abroad are the nodal point for trade and investment promotion. They are actively involved in collection and dissemination of market intelligence for the Indian export agencies; organisation of direct interaction between the businessmen from India and other countries for trade and investment promotion; commercial publicity; participation in trade fairs; procurement and dissemination of trade related literature including the policy matters; identification of potential buyers of Indian goods and investors interested in India and in resolving trade related disputes. These efforts and a focused strategy for export promotion and foreign investment have yielded positive and encouraging results.

[Translation]

Dry Ports

3868. PROF. PREM SINGH CHANDUMAJRA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the demand for setting up of dry ports has come up before Government as a result of the rising import-export trade over the years;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have formulated any scheme for setting up of such dry ports in various areas of the country;

(d) if so, the names of places, where such ports will be set up; and